Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlelady for

yielding.

Mr. Speaker, we have a huge challenge in Iraq. It is a challenge for

Democrats. It is a challenge for Republicans. It is a challenge for the

President and for the Congress. We need an American solution to that

challenge. The question before us today is whether this resolution is

going to advance that solution or it is actually going to make it more

difficult.

I am one of the 17 Republicans that wasn't convinced of the surge;

but I am aware now that we are doing it. It is underway, and the plan

is clear to have General Petraeus report in September.

I am not certain why it is that we should be debating today a

resolution prior to that time because, between now and then, rather

than having a succession of political kind of resolutions, we could be

working toward an American consensus on this. I would submit, Mr.

Speaker, that that consensus is not that far away. I think we can start

with two very clear observations. First, our military has done exactly

what we have asked them to do. And they have done it very well.

Second, we need to use the American concept of accountability. We

need to impose accountability on the Iraqi regime and say to them, we

have these benchmarks and here are some rewards for success and some

consequences for failure.

And between now and September 30, if we work in a cooperative way, I

think we can find a whole series of success check points that we can

lay out for the regime in Baghdad. We can say to them, Republicans,

Democrats, the President and Congress alike, can say to them, here are

the things that we want you to accomplish, and we have the right to

insist that you accomplish them because after all, we are spending $2

billion a week. But even more important than that, far more important

than that, we have American lives at risk. So we have the right as

their protectors. We want you to achieve these things. If you do, you

get these rewards. If you fail, these are the consequences. We can lay

out a whole series of those if we work together in a cooperative way.

The President, the Congress, Republicans and Democrats, we can come up

with that American solution and we can find a way forward in Iraq.

The question that I think the proponents of this resolution need to

answer is, if you simply set the withdrawal date of April 1, what went

with all of that accountability? What went with all of those success

check points? The question really for the proponents is: How do you

know by April 1, such a date in stone, that you will have succeeded?

Why not work cooperatively between now and September, awaiting the

report, to prepare a series of very carefully thought out success check

points with consequences for failure and rewards for success? And think

through the plan. As it is, I think there is not much of a plan; and,

therefore, I will vote against the resolution.